

Frontrunners – innovative practice for effective change management

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THE NETHERLANDS

11 PES offices in the Netherlands (accounting for around a third of all PES offices) constantly operate as so-called 'frontrunners'. Frontrunners basically implement experiments for better understanding of whether and how service provision, labour market instruments, processes, etc. can be improved. Based on the results of the implemented pilot projects the central office decides whether to extend successful practices to the entire organisation, to continue the experiment in a modified form, or to stop it. This leads to a constant revision and update of PES services.

Name of the PES

UWV WERKBedrijf

Scope of measure

(a pilot project or a national reform)

Implementing effective change management in PES using pilot projects

When was the practice
implemented?

2010, ongoing

What was the driver for introducing
the practice?
Was it internal or external?

The main reason for implementing Frontrunners was the idea that the PES can only reach its objectives if it constantly adapts to the dynamic needs of both sides of the labour market. As part of the change management strategy, Frontrunner offices help to establish which alternatives to (traditional) service provision, ALMPs, communication and support mechanisms to customers, etc. really help and which ones don't.

Which organisation was involved
in its implementation?

Headquarters, district offices, and regional offices.

Which groups were targeted
by the practice?

Employees at all levels and customers.

What were the practice's
main objectives?

The Frontrunners are a crucial element of UWV WERKBedrijf's change management strategy. It allows it to constantly adapt to the changing requests of the labour market and to improve its own services, internal structures and organisational choices.

What activities were carried out?

In a selection of 11 employment agencies which act as frontrunners, implementation of the Frontrunners idea involves carrying out pilot projects in the Frontrunner offices, and implementation of mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up of pilot project results, in order to spread effective approaches and instruments to the entire organisation.

What resources and
other relevant organisational
aspects were involved?

Since the organisation was changing rapidly due to austerity measures, there was a greater need for testing the changes. From that perspective the frontrunner idea arose. Nowadays this method is still very useful and also applicable for developing new services.

What were the source(s) of funding?

PES budget.

What were the
outputs of the practice:
people reached and products?

A variety of pilot projects has already been implemented via the Frontrunners. Examples of such pilot projects include the following:

- ▶ Werkverkenner
- ▶ CV Quality Card
- ▶ E-coaching
- ▶ Specific activation measures for customers that failed to apply for jobs
- ▶ Specific support for customers with disabilities

The results of these pilot projects were evaluated on a scientific basis and examined carefully as to whether they should be implemented throughout the organisation or whether they needed to be modified.

What outcomes have been identified?

Successful pilot projects have been extended to the entire organisation, some of them have been repeated in a modified way, and others have been dropped due to unconvincing results.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The Fronrunner approach is generally viewed as positive, but one major constraint in the past is the limited communication of Fronrunners' results. Staff of Fronrunner offices had the feeling that the departments responsible for the implementation of the pilots were not adequately involved in the dissemination of results.

Based on these experiences, a more systematic approach was introduced for the discussion, assessment and transfer of Fronrunners' results to the entire organisation. An action plan ensures that the department of a Fronrunners' office that is responsible for implementation feels more involved in the follow-up of its work results.



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